



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION

Tools for schools - Learning@Schools 2011

Ministry of Education Assistive Technology

The Ministry of Education Assistive Technology team have developed a number of resources to support New Zealand schools. The resources can be found on the Ministry of Education website.

Ministry of Education Resources:

www.minedu.govt.nz (search term: Assistive Technology)

- CAT newsletter – information about current specialised software and hardware including popular CAT articles
 - Text-to-speech
 - Voice recognition
 - Making the most of your computer
 - PowerPoint - books and tips
 - Literacy support through word prediction
 - Universal design
- Guidelines – outlines service pathway and appropriate service in each phase
- Fact sheets – clarify frequently asked questions (e.g. eligibility, insurance etc.)
- Assistive technology resources database
www.inclusive.org.nz

Voice Recognition

Voice Recognition allows the user to enter text onto the computer by speaking. Most packages on the market now allow for either full or nearly full hands free computer use.

This tool is suited to people for whom dexterity and/or mobility is an issue, people unable to use arms and/or hands and those with mild repetitive stress injuries. For students with learning difficulties this can assist with thought to paper processing, handwriting legibility and writing phobic problems, but this software is not yet a magic bullet.

Dragon <http://www.nuance.com/partners/talk/>
Microsoft Vista <http://www.microsoft.com>
SpeakQ <http://www.gogsoftware.com>

Text-to-Speech

Speech supports independent writing, reading and comprehension. It allows students to edit their own work by listening to what they have written, to listen to the work of others, and to access material well above their current reading level.

This type of program is suitable for people with learning or reading problems, people with some visual impairment, or for those who would like audio feedback from the computer. Audio feedback can be a helpful editing tool as it reads the text as it is written rather than what the writer 'thought' they had written.

Wordtalk <http://www.wordtalk.org.uk/Home/>
DSpeech <http://dspeech.en.softonic.com/>

Literacy support with word prediction

Word prediction software is an "intelligent" word processing add-on that can alleviate writing problems by reducing the number of keystrokes necessary for typing words and supporting spelling, reading, editing and writing.

Word prediction programs are ideally suited to students who need to reduce the number of keystrokes pressed (those with motor impairments) and students who are poor spellers, or have difficulty with writing tasks.

WordQ <http://www.gogsoftware.com>
Penfriend <http://www.penfriend.biz/>
Co:Writer <http://www.donjohnston.com>
Soothsayer <http://www.ahf-net.com/sooth.htm>
+ Ginger <http://www.gingersoftware.com/>

Concept mapping

Concept maps support thinking and writing as they help to capture ideas that may be complex, involve multiple sources, may be difficult to say in words, or are difficult to remember. Concept maps, also called graphic organisers, typically include mind mapping tools, visual maps and diagrams.

Freemind <http://freemind.sourceforge.net>
Edraw <http://www.edrawsoft.com/freemind.php>
Thinksheet <http://www.fishermarriott.com>
Bubbl.us <http://bubbl.us/>
Kidspiration <http://www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration>
Inspiration <http://www.inspiration.com/>

Contacts

cat.help@minedu.govt.nz
Mel Holland Technology Advisor, (04) 463 8948
mel.holland@minedu.govt.nz